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SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FOR DOL/ILAB TINA FAULKNER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UPDATE OF CHILD LABOR INFORMATION FOR TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT ACT (GSP) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

REF: SECSTATE 168607

1. As requested in reftel, Post is providing updated information on child labor in Jordan. Post has informed GOJ that we are compiling the information for the report. In addition, we will meet with Ministry of Labor officials the week of October 21 to discuss further.

2. During the past year, PolOff discussed the issue of child labor with GOJ officials, local NGOs, labor leaders and ILO officials. In general, child labor is not a serious problem in Jordan. There were no significant developments in the area of child labor during the past year. The "worst forms" of child labor, as defined by the ILO, are virtually non-existent in Jordan.

3. The following information is keyed to reftel, para F:

A. Jordan ratified ILO Convention 182 on April 20, 2000. The minimum age for employment is 16. According to Article 74 of the Labor Law, workers must be 18 for certain types of employment i.e. "hazardous, exhausting or prejudicial to health jobs" (in accordance with ILO Convention 182).

B. The Ministry of Labor has a Child Labor Unit and MOL inspectors have judicial authority to fine and/or shut down companies, according to Article 9 of the Labor Law.

C. Information requested from GOJ; Post is awaiting a GOJ update and will report septel.

D. The Petra news agency reported October 15 that the overall school attendance rate in Jordan is 92 percent, while total secondary school attendance is 79 percent. There is compulsory attendance in school to age 16. The dropout rate for Jordanian children is 11 percent, according to the GOJ.

E. In July 2002, the Ministry of Labor issued a comprehensive 80 page study entitled "A Report on the Status of Child Labor in Jordan" for 2001. This study included a national survey on child labor within the framework of the ILO/International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC). The report, which is considered reliable by local ILO officials and NGOs, states that 1.1 percent of females and 13 percent of males aged 15-16 are working. The majority of this child labor is part-time work in auto maintenance, "casual work" (such as helping out in family shops) and tradescrafts such as carpentry. "Selling", i.e. street vendors, is a growing problem but constitutes a small percentage (7 percent) of total child labor according to the report.

F. The number of children working in the "worst kinds" of child labor is negligible in Jordan, based on information provided by human rights and labor activists. The Ministry of Labor is in the process of developing a strategic plan concerning child labor.

GNEHM